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**Environment Department to Announce “Historic Initiative” to Combat Workplace Violence Thursday in Santa Fe**

(Santa Fe, NM) —New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry and Deputy Secretary Derrith Watchman-Moore will join Senator Richard Martinez Thursday to announce the Department’s plans to improve the safety of convenience store workers on the night shift. The press conference will be held on Thursday May 8th at 2 pm at the Santa Fe Railyard Park, on the corner of Guadalupe Street and Cerrillos Road in Santa Fe.

Mitch Austin, who was shot a half dozen times and left partially paralyzed after a robbery and attack at the convenience store in Taos where he worked, is also scheduled to speak.

A series of violent acts in recent years, including the January 2002 abduction and murder of Elizabeth Garcia, a Hobbs convenience store clerk, led to the passage of Senate Joint Memorial 4 during the last legislative session. This memorial, sponsored by Senator Martinez, calls upon NMED’s Occupational Health and Safety Bureau to undertake a study and find solutions to this issue.

“This is an historic initiative that will save lives and reduce crime,” said Governor Bill Richardson.

NMED will announce its plans on Thursday, May 8 at 2 pm at the Santa Fe Railyard Park, on the corner of Guadalupe and Cerrillos Streets in Santa Fe. A map is attached.

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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